

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 277294

64

ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

666

DRAFTED BY: S/CCT:RAFEAREY:NWH

APPROVED BY: S/CCT:RAFEAREY

S/S-O:DLMACK

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P 220209Z NOV 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO PRIORITY

AMCONSUL ASMARA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 277294

EXDIS NOFORN

FOLLOWING REPEAT DAMASCUS 4654 ACTION SECSTATE 21 NOVEMBER 75.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 4654

EXDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, IT, SY, US

SUBJ: KAGNEW FOUR

REF: DAMASCUS 4277

1. EMBOFF MET WITH SYRIAN ALAWITE LAWYER MUNIR AL-ABDALLAH

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PAGE 02 STATE 277294

NOV 20 WHOSE NAME HAD BEEN SUGGESTED BY FOREIGN MINISTRY

DIRECTOR OF AMERICAN AFFAIRS AS SOMEONE WHO KNEW ERITREAN SITUATION WELL AND ALSO OF ITS LEADERS. IN FRANK YET PLEASANT MANNER, LAWYER ALMOST IMMEDIATELY MENTIONED VISIT FEW WEEKS AGO OF ITALIAN GENERAL (REFTEL) "AUTHORIZED BY THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT TO ACT AS MEDIATOR" TO ASSIST IN OBTAINING RELEASE OF CAPTIVES. LAYWER SAID HE HAD BEEN PERONALLY BRIEFED ON TALKS BY OSMAN SABBE, LEADER OF PLF WITH WHOM ITALIAN HAD MET WHILE HERE. HE ADDED THAT SABBE HAD ALSO MET WITH "AMERICAN AMBASSADOR IN MOGADISCIO" TO DISCUSS STATUS OF PRISONERS. LAWYER VOLUNTARILY PROVIDED EMBOFF WITH PHONE NUMBERS OF LOCAL ELF OFFICER AND OF PLF OFFICE IN BEIRUT WHERE PRINTED MATERIAL ON ERITREAN REVOLUTION COULD BE OBTAINED. HE SAID THAT SABBE HAD ALSO TOLD HIM PLF HELD TWO AMERICANS AND ELF THE OTHER TWO AND THAT ERITREANS INTENDED TO KEEP THEM ALL ALIVE AND WELL. IN RESPONSE TO EMBOFF'S QUESTION REGARDING REPORTED UNIFICATION OF ELF AND PLF HE SAID THAT UNIFIED STRUCTURE DID NOT HAVE MUCH SUBSTANCE TO IT. IT WAS CLEARLY HIS BELIEF THAT TWO MOVEMENTS WERE STILL OPERATING SEPARATELY.

2. ITALIAN EMBOFF WHO PROVIDED INFO REFTTEL TOLD US GENERAL WAS BACK IN DAMASCUS NOV 11 BUT UNABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH ERITREANS. HE THEN FLEW TO BEIRUT IN HOPES OF MAKING CONTACT THERE. HE ADDED THAT CABLE HAS BEEN RECEIVED BY EMBASSY NOTIFYING THEM OF THIRD VISIT PERHAPS AS EARLY AS NEXT WEEK.

3. COMMENT: (A) AL-ABDALLAH DOES INDEED EEM TO HAVE GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF AND CONNECTIONS WITH ERITREAN LIBERATION MOVEMENT LEADERS, BOTH PLF AND ELF. WE ARE NOT SURE WHY FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL SUGGESTED HIM TO US BUT BELIVE HE MAY BE AN UNOFFICIAL SARG CONTACT POINT WITH ERITREANS.

(B) AS FOR ITALIAN GENERAL, WHATEVER HE IS UP TO, HE SEEMS TO HAVE LEFT WIDE TRAIL THROUGH DAMASCUS.

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PAGE 03 STATE 277294

4. DEPT PLEASE PASS OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED.
PELLETREAU
UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: LIBERATION FRONTS, PRISONERS RELEASE, NEGOTIATIONS, ATTORNEYS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 22 NOV 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE277294
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: S/CCT:RAFEAREY:NWH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750407-0268
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751119/aaaaaqqt.tel
Line Count: 110
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 DAMASCUS 4277
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 JUN 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <17 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KAGNEW FOUR
TAGS: PFOR, ET, IT, SY, US, ELF, PLF, (AL-ABDALLAH, MUNIR)
To: ADDIS ABABA MULTIPLE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006